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## CRITICAL NOTICES.

*Philo about the Contemplative Life, or the Fourth Book of the Treatise concerning Virtues.* Critically edited, with a defence of its genuineness, by F. C. CONYBEARE, M.A., late Fellow of University College, Oxford. With a facsimile. (Oxford: Clarendon Press.) 1895.

EVEN if we cannot fully assent to Mr. Conybeare's proposition that "the treatise of Philo on the Contemplative Life is the most important of all his voluminous works" (Preface, p. v), it is undoubtedly one of great interest; and the interest in it which was somewhat damped by recent attacks upon its genuineness will be once more aroused by the masterly defence which is now before us. Its attractiveness for the student of human thought and custom is not found in its exposition of Philo's philosophy, but in its description of a peculiar body of ascetics, for whom Philo professes an unbounded admiration, though he himself was content to follow a less stringent rule. Before giving some account of Mr. Conybeare's edition it may be well to remind the reader of the principal features of the treatise itself.

It begins by referring to a previous work descriptive of the Essenes, who cultivated "the practical life"; and the writer, following the proper order of his investigation, now turns to those who had devoted themselves to "contemplation," and declares that he will give a perfectly true account. The character of their philosophy was indicated by their name, *θεραπευταί* and *θεραπευτρίδες*, which, however, was not without ambiguity. It might refer to their office of tending the soul when overwhelmed with pleasures and desires, and the multitude of other passions, or to their service of pure Being (*θεραπεύειν τὸ ὄν*). For the latter they had received instruction "from nature and the sacred laws,"—a distinction which may refer to Jews, who were monotheists by race, and to proselytes, who received their monotheism from a study of the Mosaic Law (p. 293). Their exalted spirituality is contrasted with the worship of those who honoured the elements, under the invented names of divinities, or the sun, moon, and stars, or the whole cosmos—for these required a fabricator,—or the demi-gods, with their contradictory attributes of mortal and immortal, and the impure and impossible origin which was assigned

to them, or images of wood and stone, to say nothing of the beast-worship of the Egyptians. Such men must remain incurable, the eye of the soul, by which truth and falsehood are discerned, being blind. But the Therapeutic race longed for the sight of Being, and adhered to the rank which led to perfect blessedness, not going to it through custom or advice, but rapt by a heavenly love and enthusiasm. Hence, owing to their desire of immortal life they count themselves already dead to that which is mortal, and leave their substance to sons or daughters or other relatives, or, if they have no relatives, to companions and friends, thus yielding their blind wealth to those who are still blind in understanding. Here Philo interposes a little bit of his worldly shrewdness. The Greeks celebrated Anaxagoras and Democritus, because, when they were smitten with a love of philosophy, they allowed their property to be turned into sheep-walks. The men deserved admiration for their own superiority to the attractions of wealth; but it would have been much better, instead of leaving their possessions to feed cattle, to have ministered to the necessities of men, and raised kindred or friends from poverty to comfort. Enemies can do no worse than create an artificial penury; and therefore the Therapeutae are more admirable, who are swayed by no inferior impulse towards philosophy, and by giving away, instead of destroying, their wealth, benefit others as well as themselves. Having disposed of their property, they forsake brothers, children, wives, parents, even the countries in which they were born and reared. But they do not remove to another city, like slaves who ask to be sold, and so obtain a change of masters, but not freedom; for every city, even the best governed, is full of disturbances and worries which are intolerable to him who has once been led by wisdom. But they make their abode in gardens or lonely fields, not from misanthropy, but because they know the danger of intercourse with men of dissimilar character.

This class of people was found in many parts of the world, but abounded in Egypt in each of the so-called nomes, and particularly in the neighbourhood of Alexandria. Their favourite resort was a low hill above Lake Mareotis, a spot selected both for the sake of security and on account of the delightful temperature of the air. Security was afforded by the surrounding country-houses and villages; and the air was rendered agreeable by constant breezes from the lake and the sea, which, mingling together, produced a most healthy condition. Their houses were of the cheapest kind, being intended simply for a protection against the weather. They were not close to one another, as in cities, for this would have interfered with the desired solitude; nor were they far apart, because the inmates wished for communion

with one another, and for mutual defence against robbers. Each house was provided with a sacred room, called *σεμνείον* and *μοναστήριον*, in which the Therapeutae celebrated in solitude the mysteries of the holy life, introducing nothing that related to the necessities of the body, but laws, and oracles delivered through prophets, and hymns, and the other things by which knowledge and piety are increased. For they continually remembered God, so that even in dreams nothing was imaged in their minds but the beauty of the Divine virtues and powers, and many spoke forth in sleep the dogmas of the sacred philosophy. They offered prayer twice a day, at dawn and in the evening; when the sun was rising, asking that their understanding might be filled with heavenly light, and, when it was setting, that the soul, freed from the senses, might follow the steps of truth. They spent the interval in reading the scriptures and turning them into allegory. They had also compositions of ancient founders of the sect, who had left models of allegorical interpretation, which they imitated; so that they were not only given to contemplation, but composed songs and hymns in every kind of metre.

Thus six days were spent in the lonely study of philosophy, and during these days they did not even cross the vestibule. But on the seventh day they assembled in a common sanctuary, where they reverently took their seats according to age, having their hands folded in their garments, the right between the breast and the chin, the left hanging at their side. The eldest and most learned in their doctrines then addressed them in words which, unlike those of the rhetoricians or sophists, reached the soul and remained securely there. The rest listened in silence, and signified their approval only by looks and nods. The sanctuary was provided with two enclosures; for women also, animated by the same zeal as the men, were present at these services. The partition between the two chambers was sufficiently high to meet the requirements of feminine modesty, but was open above so as to offer no obstacle to hearing.

Self-restraint was the foundation on which they built their virtues. None of them would partake of food or drink before sunset, since they deemed philosophy worthy of the light, but the bodily necessities of darkness. Some remembered to eat only after three days, and some were so feasted by wisdom that they refrained from food for double that period, and scarcely after six days partook of the necessary nourishment. The seventh day was an exception. They regarded this as a high festival, and when they had attended to the soul they fattened the body with cheap bread and salt (which the very luxurious seasoned with hyssop) and with water from the spring. They ate enough not to be hungry, and drank enough not to be thirsty. Their

clothing also was of the cheapest kind, and used simply as a protection against wet and cold.

Our author now desires to contrast the festivals of the Therapeutae with the luxurious banquets of others, and proceeds to give a long account of the gluttony and excesses which prevailed in wealthy circles. Those who had devoted themselves to knowledge and contemplation according to the sacred precepts of Moses observed a very different rule. Then follows a description of a feast which Mr. Conybeare identifies with the feast of Pentecost. The chief difficulty that suggests itself is in the interpretation of *δι' ἐπτά ἑβδομάδων*, which we must translate "after an interval of seven weeks." This has been frequently understood in the sense of "every seven weeks," or, more properly, every fiftieth day—a meaning which might seem justified by the failure to mention any point of time from which the seven weeks were reckoned. We may perhaps explain this omission as due to inadvertence on the part of the writer; but I cannot agree with Mr. Conybeare that the ordinary interpretation is untenable. This, however, is a subordinate point, and we may proceed with the description of the feast. First, the Therapeutae assembled together after seven weeks, expressing admiration not only for the simple seven, but also for its power ( $7^2=49$ ). This was the eve of a very great festival, which was celebrated on the fiftieth day, fifty being a most holy number and most closely connected with nature, being made out of the power of the right-angled triangle, which is the beginning of the genesis and substance of the universe<sup>1</sup>. When on this day they assembled, clad in their white dress, they first of all stood in rows, and with uplifted eyes and hands prayed that their feast might be acceptable to God. The elders then, following the order of their election, reclined on cheap cushions of papyrus, their age being reckoned by the number of years they had spent within the guild. Women also feasted with them, most of them being aged virgins, who had been moved by their zeal for wisdom to devote themselves to a life of celibacy. The men were placed apart on the right hand, the women on the left. They were waited upon by the younger members, whose garments flowed loosely, in token that the service was one of affection, and not such as was rendered by slaves. The viands were those already mentioned. "In those days" no wine was brought in, but only the most transparent water, cold for most, hot for those among the oldest members who lived delicately. The table was pure from things containing blood. When they had taken their places, reclining in the aforesaid order, the president carefully expounded some portion of Scripture, drawing

<sup>1</sup> This refers to a triangle with sides in the proportion of 3, 4, and 5, the sum of the squares of which is equal to 50.

forth its allegorical meaning, for the whole legislation appeared to these men to resemble an animal, the literal precepts being the body, the invisible meaning laid up within the words being the soul. He was heard in rapt silence, but was greeted with applause when he had finished. Hymns were next sung, partly solo, partly choral; and then the attendants brought in the table before-mentioned, on which was placed leavened bread seasoned with salt and hyssop, to distinguish it from the shew-bread in the Temple, which was unleavened and unseasoned, and of a sanctity that was not to be rivalled. When the banquet was completely over, the whole night was spent in singing and dancing. The men formed a chorus on one side, and the women on the other; and in strophe and anti-strophe they sang their hymns to God. At length they blended in one chorus, in memory of the commingling at the Red Sea, when Moses and Miriam led the thanksgiving hymns to God the Saviour. At dawn they stood fronting the east, and when they saw the sun rising, they stretched their hands towards heaven, prayed for truth and the sharp sight of reason, and withdrew once more to their several cells.

Such is an abridged account of this singular sect. The *De Vita Contemplativa* is our sole authority for the existence of the Therapeutae; and this circumstance has become the occasion for some strange hypotheses. Eusebius<sup>1</sup>, accepting the work as genuine, leaps to the conclusion, which he declares must be manifest to every one, that Philo intended to give a description, and a very accurate description, of Christian ascetics. In forming this judgment he relies upon a few superficial resemblances, and takes no notice either of fundamental differences or of chronological probability. In alluding to the renunciation of property, he appeals to Acts iv. 34 sq., and does not observe that in the case of the Christians the property was brought together into a common fund for the benefit of the Church, whereas the Therapeutae handed over their property to their relatives, and cultivated among themselves a universal poverty. The writings of ancient founders of the sect he takes to be the Gospels and Apostolic Epistles, including that to the Hebrews, though he must have known very well that these Christian Scriptures did not exist in the time of Philo, and that the Apostles, instead of being ancient founders of the sect, had recently entered on their mission and were the living leaders of the movement. He fails to notice the fact that the Therapeutae observed the Sabbath, though he admits that being apparently derived from the Hebrews they observed most of the ancient customs in rather a Jewish fashion. Jewish Christians might observe the

<sup>1</sup> *H. E.*, II, 16-17.

Sabbath ; but the total silence in regard to the "Lord's day" is not compatible with Christianity. Finally Eusebius substitutes the Paschal feast for that which was either Pentecost or a special festival recurrent every fifty days, and turns the modest banquet and joyful night into fasts and vigils. When we add to these difficulties the fact that there is not a single feature in the description which points to anything distinctively Christian, we can have no hesitation in rejecting the Eusebian hypothesis, either in its original form or with the modifications which some modern writers have given to it. The word *μοναστήριον* alone makes us pause ; but a moment's reflection satisfies us that even here we are not on Christian ground. The term does not describe the abode of a society of monks, but the private chamber in each house which was dedicated to solitary study and prayer.

Eusebius must have been moved by his eagerness to find early and authentic evidence of the presence of Christianity in Alexandria, and accordingly had no reason for calling in question the genuineness of his document. But Grätz<sup>1</sup>, accepting the hypothesis that the Therapeutae were Christians in disguise, believed that the work was a Christian forgery written in the interests of monasticism. His arguments, though pronounced by Jost<sup>2</sup> to be "perfectly convincing," failed to command the general assent of scholars, and Zeller's refutation was deemed satisfactory<sup>3</sup>. Kuenen<sup>4</sup>, however, lent the high authority of his name to the hypothesis of forgery. But he relied not so much on the arguments of Grätz as on the general "impression of untruthfulness, and, consequently, of spuriousness," which the work itself leaves upon the mind, and on the improbability of several of the details. He also thought it very unlikely that Clement of Alexandria should not have mentioned the Therapeutae, if they existed. He therefore attributed the treatise to a Jewish writer of the third century after Christ, and supposed that his object was to give an ideal picture of ascetic life. Nicolas<sup>5</sup> arrived independently at a similar result, and Derenbourg<sup>6</sup> also supported this side of the question. It was reserved, however, for Lucius<sup>7</sup> to bring about, for a time, a widespread reversal of scholarly judgment. He arrived at the conclusion that the treatise appeared not long before Eusebius, who is the first to cite it, at the end of the third or in the opening years of the fourth

<sup>1</sup> *Gesch. d. Juden*, III, 463 sq.

<sup>2</sup> *Gesch. des Judenthums*, I, p. 214, note 2.

<sup>3</sup> *Phil. der Griech.*, 2nd edit., III, ii. p. 255, note 4.

<sup>4</sup> *Religion of Israel*, III, p. 217 sq.

<sup>5</sup> *Revue de Théol.*, 3ième série, VI, 25-42. See Conybeare, p. 343.

<sup>6</sup> *Journal asiatique*, 1868, p. 282 sq.

<sup>7</sup> *Die Therapeuten u. ihre Stellung in der Gesch. der Askese*, 1879.

century, and that it was the composition of a Christian educated in literature and philosophy, and enamoured of the asceticism of his time, his object being to glorify the ascetic practices of Christians which prevailed everywhere, but especially in his own land of Egypt. For this purpose he assumed the authority of Philo, and hence was obliged to avoid mentioning anything specifically Christian. Zeller, in the third edition of his great work<sup>1</sup>, admitted the conclusive character of the arguments adduced by Lucius. Schürer, in a careful review<sup>2</sup>, considered that the negative part of the thesis—that the *De Vita Contemplativa* did not proceed from Philo—was proved, and that the positive part—the assertion of Christian authorship—was at least rendered probable. Mr. Conybeare<sup>3</sup> refers to other scholars who acknowledged themselves convinced. In the list I find my own name; and I may be permitted to add a few words in explanation of the quotations which are given from my *Philo Judaeus* on p. 393. These brief sentences were not intended to express any deliberate judgment of my own. My object was not to discuss the genuineness of Philo's writings, but to describe his philosophy as set forth in treatises the genuineness of which was acknowledged. My work was written on the supposition that the *De Vita Contemplativa* was genuine, and the hypothesis of Lucius appeared to me, on the face of it, to be exceedingly improbable. The question, however, had no appreciable effect on my particular line of study, and, being otherwise engaged, I did not give it a very serious examination, but acquiesced provisionally in the opinion of scholars of high repute, whose judgment carried all the more weight because it was pronounced in opposition to their previous conviction. Mr. Conybeare, therefore, finds in me one fully prepared to admit the force of the arguments which he adduces in support of the genuineness of the work. These arguments move upon several lines of evidence, which may be here briefly indicated, while for details recourse must be had to the author's learned dissertations.

The first line of defence rests upon the history of the text. This history is gathered from a careful examination of four sources,—the Greek manuscripts, the excerpts in Eusebius, the ancient Armenian Version, and the old Latin Version. The majority of the Greek manuscripts fall into two groups, called respectively  $\beta$  and  $\gamma$ , the former comprising six, and the latter eight codices. There are, in addition, four manuscripts which have to be considered individually. The whole of these manuscripts are proved by a lacuna, which is filled up in the Armenian Version, to be descended from a common archetype,  $\Sigma$ . On page 483, at the beginning of § 10, Mangey's text

<sup>1</sup> III, ii. p. 307. <sup>2</sup> *Theol. Literaturz.*, 1880, No. 5, III sqq. <sup>3</sup> Pp. vi and 326.



is unintelligible. The passage is thus restored by Mr. Conybeare, the words supplied from the Armenian being in square brackets:—*Μετὰ δὲ τὸ κατακλιθῆναι μὲν τοὺς συμπότας ἐν αἷς ἐδήλωσα τάξεσι, στήναι δὲ τοὺς διακονουμένους ἐν κόσμῳ πρὸς ὑπηρεσίαν ἐτοίμους, [ὁ πρόεδρος αὐτῶν, ὅτε κινή ἡσυχία γέγονεν]—πότε δὲ οὐκ ἔστιν; εἴποι τις ἄν' ἄλλ' ἔτι μᾶλλον ἢ πρότερον, ὡς μηδὲ γρύξαι τινα τολμῶν ἢ ἀναπνεῦσαι βιαίτερον—ζητεῖται τι τῶν ἐν τοῖς ἱεροῖς γράμμασιν ἢ καὶ ὑπ' ἄλλου προταθέν τι ἐπιλύεται.* The importance of this fact in the present connexion is that it establishes the separate genealogies of the Armenian and our existing Greek codices. We must now take a further step. The Latin Version, although it is fragmentary and inaccurate, is proved by its readings to be the corrupt descendant of Σ. It probably dates from about the middle of the fourth century, and thus Σ is thrown back to a comparatively early period. If now we return to the Armenian Version, it becomes apparent that at least as early as the time of Eusebius there were divergent types of text, which indicate a considerable lapse of time during which the divergences arose. This argument is confirmed by the fact that the Eusebian text points to a third independent type, which on the whole is nearer to the Armenian than to the Greek codices. The argument seems valid that Eusebius did not make his extracts from a work which had been recently sprung upon the market, but from one which had already undergone a long process of transcription. Thus the history of the text is adverse to the hypothesis of Lucius.

The second line of evidence meets us in the *testimonia* which are placed under the text of the treatise. These consist of a vast collection of extracts from the works of Philo, illustrating the language and ideas of the *De Vita Contemplativa*, and tending to show, from the identity of style and thought, that the author is no other than Philo himself. With this valuable body of material we must connect the Commentary, which not only makes some additions to the store, but illustrates the diction of the author by ample quotations from nearly contemporaneous writers, the general result being, in Mr. Conybeare's opinion, to show that the language of the *De Vita Contemplativa* "bears exactly the same relation to that of these writers, as does that of the rest of Philo's works. That is to say, it thoroughly belongs to what Liddell and Scott term the Roman Period of Greek Literature." The language has the closest relations with Plutarch (p. 354). Other important facts are also pointed out. Several words are almost, if not quite, peculiar to Philo. A much larger number, used in the treatise and in the rest of Philo's works, are otherwise rare, except in contemporary authors ("contemporary" being evidently used not in the strict sense, but in that of belonging to the same period of

literary history). Some words are found nowhere else, even in Philo. And lastly, there is a considerable list of "syntactical and other usages, which, being characteristic of Philo in general, are also found in the D.U.C." All this constitutes an important body of evidence; and Schürer, who has derived from it decisive confirmation of his previous scepticism, has nevertheless to admit the strong impression which it leaves that the author of the treatise has "received Philo's language and world of ideas deeply into his own flesh and blood<sup>1</sup>." Schürer further alludes to the fact that the younger philologists in Germany who are most thoroughly acquainted with Philo are satisfied that the work is genuine. In this investigation Massebieau led the way in two excellent articles in the *Revue de l'histoire des religions*<sup>2</sup>. Mr. Conybeare has added enormously to the store of parallels there presented; and as the illustrative passages are fully printed in Greek, the reader has all the material before him which is necessary for forming his own judgment.

The purely literary evidence will affect different men differently. To those who have no difficulty in attributing to the forger a boundless power of refined imitation it will carry little weight. To others who act upon the proverb, *ex pede Herculem*, and believe that successful forgery in the name of an author, if not of high genius, at least of unusual ability and distinguished style, is an exceedingly difficult art, this line of evidence will come with almost overwhelming force. It is easy enough to imitate tricks of style, or to borrow some peculiarities of phrase; but to write in a required style, without betraying any signs of imitation; to introduce perpetual variation into sentences which are nevertheless characteristic; to have shades of thought and suggestion, which remind one of what has been said elsewhere, and nevertheless are delicately modified, and pass easily into another subject; in a word, to preserve the whole flavour of a writer's composition in a treatise which has a theme of its own, and follows its own independent development, may well seem beyond the reach of the forger, and must be held to guarantee the genuineness of a work, unless very weighty arguments can be advanced on the other side.

The third line of evidence is traced in the earlier part of an elaborate "Excursus on the Philonean authorship of the *De Vita Contemplatiua*." Mr. Conybeare there points out various allusions, in the undoubted works of Philo, to the kind of ascetic life which was led by the Therapeutae, and claims to have established from these allusions the existence of recluses who had withdrawn from

<sup>1</sup> See his review in the *Theol. Literaturz.* for July 20, 1895.

<sup>2</sup> XVI, 1887, pp. 170-198 and 284-319.

Alexandria, and devoted themselves in their solitude to the kind of life which is described in detail in the treatise before us.

Lastly, the same Excursus contains a reply to the various objections which have been brought, especially by Grätz and Lucius, against the genuineness of the work; and, in my judgment, it is shown conclusively that at least several of these are quite untenable, and have no better origin than misapprehension or oversight.

It is impossible here to test the force of these several lines of argument; for the impression which they make depends upon a vast accumulation of material, and an examination of minute questions of thought and language, the discussion of which would carry one far beyond the legitimate bounds of a review. The reader who wishes to form an independent judgment must work through the book for himself; and I must be content with expressing my own opinion that an exceedingly strong case has been made out in defence of the Philonean authorship, and that this ought to command our assent unless very formidable difficulties are presented on the other side. Schürer, in the review already referred to, formulates a series of objections which have confirmed his previous opinion; and as these are probably the strongest which can be still relied on, I may conclude my notice by an attempt to estimate their weight.

In the first place, the collection made by Mr. Conybeare of allusions to the Therapeutic life has satisfied Schürer that Philo knew nothing of the Therapeutae, not only because he fails to mention them where you would expect him to do so, but because he uses expressions which are inconsistent with statements and ideas in the *De Vita Contemplativa*. He appeals, first, to *De Mutatione Nominum*, § 4 (Mang. I, 583). Philo, he says, "speaks here of the perfectly wise, who voluntarily renounce riches and comfort. But he does not betray by a syllable that he is acquainted with a whole colony of such in his immediate neighbourhood; on the contrary, he says such are scarcely to be found (σπάνιον δὲ καὶ τὸ γένος καὶ μόλις εὕρισκόμενον, πλὴν οὐκ ἀδύνατον γενέσθαι)." The *De Vita Contemplativa*, on the other hand, says that such people exist in many places, being especially numerous in Egypt, and most of all in the neighbourhood of Alexandria (πολλαχοῦ μὲν οὖν τῆς οἰκουμένης ἐστὶ τὸ γένος . . . Πλεονάζει δὲ ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ καθ' ἕκαστον τῶν ἐπικαλουμένων νόμων, καὶ μάλιστα περὶ τὴν Ἀλεξάνδρειαν). The argument from silence may, I think, be dismissed; for it is a form of argument which is always precarious; and there are many curious instances of failure on the part of writers to mention what must have been quite familiar to them. Here, however, we are not without special evidence of Philo's mood; for it is equally strange that he fails to mention the Essenes, who were

probably a much more numerous sect than the Therapeutae. We must not be misled by Schürer's description of the latter as "a whole colony." Philo estimates the number of the Essenes as exceeding four thousand; respecting the number of the Therapeutae we have nothing but probability to guide us. One or two hundred would abundantly satisfy the description which is given of the settlement near Alexandria, for the members are represented as all meeting together, and having a common meal, and it is certainly implied that there was only one assembly in a single room. The apparent contradiction also vanishes on a nearer inspection. Whether you look upon a number as large or small depends entirely on the standard of comparison. In relation to the population of the globe a certain class of men may be exceedingly small, and scarcely to be found; in relation to what you might expect, and compared with total absence, there may be a good many. Now in the passage under consideration, Philo is speaking of those who had absolutely renounced the things of the body, and devoted themselves entirely to pleasing God. There might conceivably be thousands of such men, and nevertheless, considered as a constituent part of the human race, they would be very few. Some went so far as to say that the wise man, and therefore wisdom, were non-existent, for no one had ever been blameless, or ever could be, while bound to a mortal body. Philo contends that wisdom is a real thing, and also its lover, a wise man; and he has a Scripture passage which justified his position—"Enoch pleased God, and was not found." Thus both the thought and the language in this passage are explained by the context, and are not inconsistent with the use of a different kind of language in a different connexion. We may usefully compare some statements in the *Quod omnis Probus Liber*, §§ 10 sqq. (II, 455 sqq.). It is there said that it is not surprising if the truly free do not come forward in great herds; first, because τὰ λίαν καλὰ σπάνια, and secondly, because such men have to avoid the life of cities. But τὸ ὀλίγον, εἰ καὶ σπάνιον, οὐκ ἀνύπαρκτον: for there were the seven wise men of Greece and others; the Magi of Persia; the Gymnosophists of India; the Essenes in Palestine, and they exceeded the number of four thousand. Here we have the contradiction, such as it is, fully exhibited within the limits of the same passage, and Grecian and barbarian lands alike proclaiming that the rare, almost non-existent, race was, after all, pretty numerous. I think, therefore, that Philo's undoubted statements are not inconsistent with the existence of little bodies of recluses scattered over the Roman Empire, forming a very minute fraction even of the Jewish population, and nevertheless, if considered simply by themselves, sufficiently numerous to justify the description in the *De Vita Contemplativa*.

Next, Schürer finds an absolute contradiction between the views expressed in the treatise and the genuine opinions of Philo, as enunciated in *De Profugis*, §§ 4-9 (I, 549-554). I must own myself quite unable to perceive the contradiction. In both treatises the ideal of perfect life is the same, τὸν ἄμικτον καὶ ἀκουώγητον μονότροπὸν τε καὶ μονωτικὸν βίον, to use the words of the *De Profugis*; or, to quote a more express statement, ἄριστον δέ, τὸ ἀνάθημα, τὸ γὰρ θεραπευτικὸν γένος ἀνάθημά ἐστι θεοῦ, ἱερωμένον τὴν μεγάλην ἀρχιερωσύνην αὐτῷ μόνῳ. So far, then, there is perfect agreement. But in the *De Profugis* this perfect life of contemplation is reserved for the mature man, who has gone through the experience of practical life, and it is said that the truth would properly blame those who inconsiderately forsake (ἀνεξέταστος ἀπολείπουσι) the duties of civil life; for they are acting as braggarts, and when without being perfectly purified they come to the courts of Divine service, they will start away from it more quickly than they approached, not enduring its austere way of living and its continuous toil. Of this reserve, says Schürer, there is no mention in the *De Vita Contemplativa*. But why should there be? There Philo is simply describing the Therapeutae; but nowhere in the treatise does he recommend their ideal life as the pattern to be forthwith imitated by all mankind. This alone would form a contradiction. Schürer, however, contends that there were among the Therapeutae some who from their earliest manhood (ἐκ πρώτης ἡλικίας) devoted their youth and bloom to the theoretic portion of philosophy, which is most beautiful and divine; and the author evidently finds this not blameworthy, as Philo does, but highly commendable. This is perfectly true; but then the men whom Philo is admonishing in the *De Profugis* are those who had not devoted themselves to either the practical or the theoretic side of philosophy, but were animated by an empty spiritual ambition, and were likely to turn in disgust from a life for which they were totally unprepared. You may blame men for doing a thing "inconsiderately," and without any adequate preparation or natural gift, and praise other men for doing the same thing, if they act advisedly, and in obedience to the call of nature. I may remind the reader that this is a distinction of frequent occurrence in Philo. Jacob represents the ἀσκητής, the man who is only striving after the better life; and this is the character with which Philo is dealing in the *De Profugis*, the whole passage being an exposition of the story of Jacob's flight from Esau. But Isaac was the symbol of "self-taught wisdom," and represented the rare souls who seem to live by nature in a diviner atmosphere. For these two orders of mind different rules are necessary. The mass of men must strive like Jacob, and win the right to withdraw from the world and its cares, and give themselves

up to the contemplation of eternal reality; but the few may be offered to God in their childhood, and live from their earliest years in the society of wisdom. It seems to me, then, that the contradiction on which Schürer lays so much stress is purely imaginary. We must add that, as Mr. Conybeare abundantly points out, such admonitions as are contained in the *De Profugis* prove that there must have been among the Jewish youth of Alexandria a disposition to adopt a life of solitary self renunciation, and an opportunity of doing so must have been afforded by some such society as is sketched in the *De Vita Contemplativa*.

The next point need be noticed only so far as it affects one of the objections of Lucius. Lucius contended that the *De Vita Contemplativa* had all the appearance of a spurious appendix to *Quod omnis Probus Liber*; for it refers to an earlier sketch of the Essenes which is contained in the latter treatise. But the latter itself professes to be the complement of a treatise *Quod omnis Insiapiens Servus*, which is no longer extant. These two essays treated the opposite sides of the same philosophical theme, and the Essenes were introduced only as a cursory illustration of the general truth, and accordingly the description of them occupies only a small part, and that not the concluding part, of the extant work. An appendix, therefore, entirely devoted to a panegyric of the Therapeutae is totally out of place. In order to rebut this argument it is not necessary to discuss Mr. Conybeare's view of the *De Vita Contemplativa*. It is sufficient to say that he accepts the suggestion of Massebieau that the description of the Therapeutae followed that of the Essenes which, as we learn from Eusebius, was contained in the Apology. There is no reason for connecting it with the account in the *Quod omnis Probus Liber*, whereas it bears strong marks of being a portion of an apologetic work. Otherwise the prolonged contrast between the Therapeutae and other professors of piety, and between their feasts and those which were held by heathen clubs and celebrated by Greek philosophers, would be quite out of place. The only difficulty which occurs to me in this suggestion arises from the large amount of space devoted to the Therapeutae in comparison with that which is accorded to the Essenes; but this might be explained by the fact that the Essenes were better known to the general public, and were less known to Philo himself. Besides, much as he admired the Essenes, he thought that the Egyptian sect had reached a higher stage of perfection. Whether these suggestions be altogether correct or not, the argument of Lucius at all events rests upon pure conjecture, and must therefore be set aside.

The question whether the feast which took place after forty-nine days was Pentecost or not has no bearing on the reality of the feast

itself or the genuineness of the description. I think Schürer is correct in his remarks on δι' ἐντὰ ἑβδομάδων, to the meaning of which I have already referred. Massebieau understands the phrase in the usual way, and translates "après chaque intervalle de sept semaines," and points out that other clubs were in the habit of meeting for a common meal a certain number of times every year, so that there is nothing strange in the statement (if that be the correct interpretation) that the members of this ascetic society met together seven times a year.

Finally, Schürer points out what he believes to be serious divergences from the thought of Philo, having first, however, conceded that the monastic ideal of the *De Vita Contemplativa*, be it Jewish or be it Christian, rests almost entirely on the premises of Philo's philosophy.

First he calls attention to an apparent contrariety between the view expressed in regard to the abandonment of wealth in the *De Vita Contemplativa* and in *De Prov.* II, §§ 12-13. In the latter Philo cites the example of Anaxagoras and Democritus to show that the wise man can voluntarily renounce his wealth, and relates only of Anaxagoras the story that he gave up his estates to his cattle. But the author of the former, though he commends these philosophers for giving up their wealth, blames them for not handing it over to their relatives, and extends the story of the cattle to Democritus. Even so; but in both cases the treatment is precisely suited to the object in view. In the *De Prov.* the philosophers are mentioned solely with the view of proving that the miseries which wise men have been forced to endure ought not to shake our faith in Providence; for men like Anaxagoras and Democritus have *voluntarily* renounced the pleasures of life for the sake of virtue. Here it would have been quite out of place to interpose a word of blame. But in the *De Vita Contemplativa* the object is to show the superiority of the Jewish ascetics, and the passage says in effect—"It is all very well to praise your Greek philosophers for giving up their wealth: so far their conduct was right, but they did it in a foolish way, and *our* men acted much more judiciously, following the dictates of benevolence towards others no less than the acquisition of wisdom for themselves." In regard to the story about the cattle we should observe that in the *De Prov.* the two philosophers are referred to separately in successive sections, and it was not necessary to repeat in the case of Democritus what had already been told of Anaxagoras. In the *De Vita Contemplativa* the two are mentioned together, in a couple of lines, as men whom the Greeks celebrated because they suffered their property to be turned into sheep-walks. The story is actually told of Democritus as well as of Anaxagoras, and references to no very recondite authors may be seen in Mr. Conybeare's

notes. A reference to the context, therefore, seems to dissipate entirely the force of this particular criticism.

Next, Schürer affirms that the allusion to fasting, like the grasshoppers which live upon air, betrays a different tendency from Philo's; but he does not show in what way, and I have not discovered the inconsistency. On the other hand, Mr. Conybeare has an interesting textual argument founded on this very passage, in which he tries to prove that the *De Vita Contemplativa* must have been written before the *Quod omnis Probus Liber*; but for this I must refer the reader to the book itself<sup>1</sup>.

But Schürer reserves what he considers to be the strongest argument for the end. This is founded on the alleged difference in the estimate of Greek philosophy. Philo learned directly from Plato, and speaks of him only with respect. This of course is a familiar fact, and hardly requires a reference to Siegfried. But the author of the *De Vita Contemplativa*, it is said, heaps insults upon Plato on account of his *Symposium*. I can find nothing in the text to justify such language. The author is anxious to prove that the feasts of the Therapeutae surpass in their temperance and their spirituality not only the wild orgies of some of the heathen clubs, but even the most celebrated banquets among the Greeks, banquets in which no less a man than Socrates took part. For this purpose he selects the *Symposium* of Xenophon and that of Plato, on the ground that they were deemed worthy of memory by men who, both in character and in words, were philosophers. This is the language of compliment rather than of insult, and it is the only thing that is said directly of Plato. The criticism of what took place at the banquet itself is another matter; and from this we can only *infer* an unfavourable judgment to this extent, that Plato would have been better advised not to have recorded it; but even this is not said. And surely, any one who knows the *Symposium* must admit that, in spite of its wonderful literary art and dramatic power, and in spite of the splendid rhapsody of Socrates, leading his hearers up to the love of absolute and eternal beauty, it contains much that would have been utterly repulsive to Philo, and treats without any definite rebuke a vice which was as loathsome to an ancient as to a modern Jew or to a modern Christian. The most ardent admirer of Plato may wish that part of the drunken speech of Alcibiades had never been written, and that it had never been placed on record that even the moral authority of Socrates was not adequate to protect him from the foulest insult, and may deem it strange that Plato betrays no consciousness that there was any insult in the case. If in saying this I am "heaping insults" on Plato, I nevertheless

<sup>1</sup> See p. 277.



regard him with genuine and unaffected admiration; and it may have been possible for an ancient writer, whose morality was not that of the Greeks, to entertain a similarly mingled judgment.

Finally, Schürer is especially struck with the difference observable in a particular point, to which he called attention in 1880, but which is once more emphasized on account of its importance. "According to Philo the ideal man was created without sex, neither man nor woman, or man and woman at the same time (*De Mundi opificio*, § 24 *fin.*; *ibid.* § 46: οὐτ' ἄρρην οὐτε θήλυς. *Leg. allegor.*, II, § 4: τὸν γενικὸν ἄνθρωπον ἐν ᾧ τὸ ἄρρεν καὶ τὸ θήλυ γένος φασὶν εἶναι...). He follows in this the lead of Plato, who has put forward the same view in the *Symposium*. And like Plato, Philo too explains the love of man and woman as the natural attraction of two separated parts of one living being (*De Mundi opif.*, § 53: ἕρως δ' ἐπιγενόμενος καθάπερ ἐνὸς ζώου διττὰ τμήματα διεστηκότα συναγαγὼν εἰς ταὐτὸν κ.τ.λ.). The author of the *De Vita Contemplativa* mentions also this very myth out of Plato's *Symposium*, but expresses in the strongest possible words his own aversion to such misleading fancies." I quote this statement in full that I may do no injustice to an argument which has been maturing for fifteen years, and which we must therefore suppose to be serious, though it makes one wonder whether Schürer has ever read the *Symposium*.

In the first place, we may remark, so keen a sense of inconsistency might have noticed the flat contradiction in the two passages cited from the confessedly genuine Philo. In one the generic man is said to be neither male nor female, in the other he is said to be both. Verbally no contradiction could be more complete, and if we did not exercise a little criticism we might pronounce it impossible that both statements could have proceeded from the same author. The contradiction, however, is easily resolved. We have only to remember that we are dealing with logical and immaterial ideas, and not with concrete objects. In one aspect the logical genus includes all its species, and therefore the genus man may be said to be both male and female, the two species into which it immediately resolves itself. In another aspect it is without the distinctive marks which belong only to the species, and therefore if you rigidly confine your view to the genus, you may say that it is neither of its species. I mention this example simply to show that care and discrimination must be exercised in judging of seeming contradictions.

And now let us test the alleged difference of opinion. The view which is gravely set down to Plato is expressed in the wildly comic and irreverent speech of Aristophanes. It is at least possible that Philo did not regard Aristophanes as the accepted exponent of Plato's

views, and it is pretty certain that his mind was cast in such a different mould that he would not appreciate the drollery of the man who set the company laughing even before he began to speak, but would rather be repelled and disgusted by this ludicrous way of treating a serious subject. What, then, is the view, not of Plato, but of Aristophanes? One would suppose from Schürer's account that it was a grave Socratic description of the ideal and incorporeal genus of humanity, neither male nor female. But it is nothing of the kind. It is a whimsical account of human nature as it was long ago. The kinds of men were then three, not two as now, namely male and female, and a third common to these two. Every man was round, and had four legs, and four arms, and two faces, with four ears, belonging to one head which was supported on a circular neck. He could walk upright when he liked; but when he wanted to go very fast, he rolled round on his eight limbs like a tumbler. These men were so strong that they were dangerous to the gods; so Zeus hit upon the happy expedient of cutting them in two, as people cut sorb-apples when they are going to preserve them, or as those who cut eggs with hairs. The result was the present race, with its different tendencies in love, which, if the reader likes, he may learn from the Greek. This is what Schürer gravely puts before us as the opinion of Plato adopted by Philo—except indeed that I have not introduced all the absurdities; and it is for passing over in silence this sort of myth that the author of the *De Vita Contemplativa* is pronounced to be other than Philo.

But let us suppose that all this was Plato's opinion, and compare it with Philo's language. The description in the *Symposium* does not use the word *σῶμα*, but it is perfectly clear that real men of flesh and blood are meant; and accordingly the author of the *De Vita Contemplativa* refers to them as *δισώματους*. Where in Philo is there any intimation that either the primitive man or the generic man had two bodies? Philo's generic man is *νοητός, ἀσώματος, . . . ἄφθαρτος φύσει*. This alone is sufficient to prove that the two conceptions are utterly different. Philo is moving amid the world of eternal ideas, describing man as he is in the thought of God; the *Symposium* draws a picture of exceedingly fleshly animals. According to Philo himself there is a *διαφορὰ πνευμάτων* between the concrete and the ideal man; but the former is *ἀνὴρ ἢ γυνή*, the human being that we now know, and not the farcical creations of Aristophanes. But what of the two parts of one animal? Philo here simply uses a comparison, *καθάπερ ἐνὸς ζώου*, as is apparent not only from the phrase itself, but from the context. He is here speaking of the first man, not of the ideal man; and there is no hint of his being, physically, anything but man as we know him now. For a time he was single (*εἷς*), and impressed

with the characters of the Cosmos and of God. But when woman too was fashioned, he recognized a kindred form, and she on her side saw no other animal more like herself, and modestly welcomed his approach, and so they were brought together like the separated parts of a single animal. How the keen discoverer of contradiction can think this the same as the opinion of Aristophanes passes my comprehension.

Thus it appears to me that Schürer's arguments break down one after another, as soon as they are subjected to a little of that criticism which is so apt to be applied to ancient books, and not to modern hypotheses. Mr. Conybeare's arguments, of which I have only given the broad outlines, remain with undiminished force. To see them in all their details the reader must have recourse to the volume itself, where he will find a wealth of material, a width of scholarship, and careful editing, which are a credit both to the author himself and to the University Press.

JAMES DRUMMOND.

*Documents de Paléographie Hébraïque et Arabe publiés avec sept planches photo-lithographiques* par ADALBERT MERX. (Leyde, E. J. Brill, 1894.)

ATTEMPTS at reproducing facsimiles were made as early as 1702 (see Prof. M. Steinschneider's essay, headed, *Zur Literatur der hebräischen Palaeographie* in the *Centralblatt für Bibliothekswesen*, IV, pp. 155-165, edited by Dr. O. Hartwig). Naturally, as facsimiles they are more or less successful, but they cannot give an accurate idea of the shape of letters. This could only be completed by the process of photography, an invention which is comparatively recent. We must therefore date photographic reproductions of Hebrew MSS. from the publication of *Facsimiles of Manuscripts and Inscriptions* (Oriental Series), by Dr. W. Wright (*The Palaeographical Society*, 1875-1883). Here a choice was made of early MSS., found in various libraries, beginning with 1073.

These facsimiles are not classified according to the characters employed by Jewish scribes in various countries; moreover, this collection does not pretend to offer specimens of Hebrew writing after the fifteenth century.

An attempt was made to represent the different kinds of Hebrew scripts in the *Facsimiles of Hebrew Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library illustrating the various forms of Rabbinical Characters with Transcriptions*